

CRAIG (C.F.)

NEUROTIC LITHEMIA.

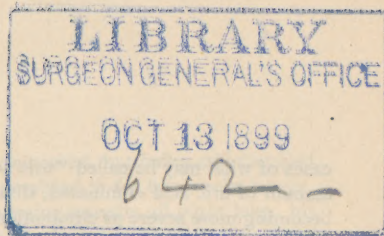
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NEUROTIC LITHEMIA.

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The relation of uric acid to diseases of the nervous system is a subject which has received but very little consideration, although it is a most important one. There can be no doubt but that uric acid has an irritant action upon nerve tissue and that its deposition in the body is followed, in many cases, by symptoms which can only be referred to such action. There is a large class of cases in which the uric acid diathesis is manifested almost entirely by clinical phenomena resulting from the injury done to the nervous system by the retention within the body of this agent, and as there is no account of this class of cases in medical literature, a short description of their characteristic symptoms may be of value.

All cases of the uric acid diathesis present some symptoms arising from the nervous system, but we will consider here only those cases in which the nervous symptoms predominate, *i. e.*, only those which would be classed as cases of nerve disease. Among the many symptoms complained of by these patients are vertigo, tinnitus aurium, persistent insomnia, neuralgia of various nerves, spinal irritation, vaso-motor disturbances, and general nervousness.

Hysterical and epileptiform convulsions have been observed by some authorities, and melancholia, associated with delusions and suicidal impulses, has also been observed.

Very many patients suffering from the uric acid diathesis complain of vertigo, tinnitus aurium and insomnia. The vertigo is generally noticed only when the sufferer moves about, or changes position suddenly, when it may be so severe as to cause falling. It is generally accompanied by vaso-motor phenomena, such as a flushing of the face and a sense of congestion in the head. Rarely the vertigo is noticed when the patient is sitting or standing quietly, objects around seeming suddenly to swim slowly before the eyes.

Tinnitus aurium, aside from any disease of the ear, is of frequent occurrence, being generally accompanied by a sudden dilatation of the blood-vessels of the brain and occurring at irregular intervals. The noises heard vary from a slight buzzing to a roar and some patients complain of temporary deafness in the ear affected. One of the most common symptoms spoken of by this class of patients is insomnia, varying in severity, but always troublesome and always accompanied by great general nervousness. One has but to converse with such a patient for a few moments to become convinced that the nervous system is profoundly affected, for the twitching hands, the unsteady eyes, the alternate flushing and paling of the countenance and the general air of "uncomfortableness," evidences this fact very clearly. Vaso-motor phenomena are very prominent in these patients and examination of the urine will always reveal large amounts of calcium oxalate crystals and decreased elimination of urates. The insomnia is invariably relieved by treatment which eliminates the uric acid from the system.

Neuralgia, affecting various portions of the body and ranging in severity from a dull ache to the most severe boring and darting pains, characterize the majority of

cases of what may be called "uric acid neuroses." The pain varies with the varying amount of uric acid eliminated, disappearing when elimination approaches normal and becoming more severe as elimination is interfered with. Almost every uric acid patient will complain of a certain amount of pain, but where the nervous system is chiefly affected the neuralgia is more severe and persistent.

Of the more severe nervous manifestations of the uric acid diathesis such as the symptoms attending spinal irritation and hysterical and epileptiform convulsions, little can be said, as the cases reported are few in number and the data given very imperfect.

One of the first clinical signs to strike the attention in these cases is the marked mental depression, verging almost into melancholia. The "world looks blue" to the patient, and he is troubled by vague forebodings and is unable to see a bright side to anything. So marked in some cases is this that suicide is even contemplated, as life seems to have lost all of its former sweetness and pleasure. No amount of encouragement or argument will in the least change or lessen the patient's gloomy views and it is only when the system is properly rid of the irritating uric acid compounds that any improvement can be looked for.

Regarding the treatment of the "uric acid neuroses" it may be said that it is substantially that of the uric acid diathesis in general. Plenty of out-door air and exercise, some labor or duty which will absorb the attention, thus preventing any morbid introspection, and the restriction of the diet, as laid down in our numerous treatises upon medicine, will with the help of certain medicinal measures, relieve and cure the existing condition.

Medicinally, we strive first of all, and most important of all, to aid the system in eliminating the uric acid formed. For this purpose no remedy we have has stood so successfully the test of experience as lithia, for the reason that the combination of lithia with uric acid results in the formation of a lithium urate, which is the most soluble of all the urates. In Thialion, a combination of lithium with a laxative salt, and which has recently been added to our therapeutic resources, we have a most powerful solvent of uric acid and also an efficient laxative, which adds greatly to its value. Its use in the uric acid diathesis is always followed by the most beneficial results, as the following cases will illustrate.

John B., æt. 30, a laborer, came to the author complaining of insomnia, occipital headache, attacks of vertigo, loss of appetite and general restlessness and nervousness. He also complained of soreness and aching in the deltoid and biceps muscles, and also in the muscles of the thigh. His work, that of a truckman, was not heavier than usual, nor did it seem to fatigue him more than it had done for months. His general appearance was good, save that he showed the lack of sleep and seemed very nervous and irritable when talking. He said that he had not slept more than two or three hours a night for two weeks. His habits were temperate in every respect. Examination of his urine showed a specific gravity of 1.036, strong acid reaction, and a heavy sediment consisting almost entirely of calcium oxalate crystals and urates. His bowels were habitually constipated.

He was put upon teaspoonful doses of Thialion in hot water after each meal for three days, and then the same dose morning and evening and told to report in two weeks. He also received directions concerning his diet. At the end of two weeks he

reported as considerably better, his sleep being much improved, but being still troubled by headache and vertigo. The same treatment was persisted in for two weeks longer, at the end of which time he reported that he was sleeping soundly all night long, his headache and vertigo had ceased and his bowels were regular.

Mr. H., American, aged 42, weight 210 pounds, married, consulted me about nine weeks ago, with the following symptoms. For a long time he had suffered from insomnia, together with great irritability. Usually a delightful man in his family, he noticed himself, as did his wife also, a gradually increasing irritability. On the slightest provocation and sometimes on none at all he would break out in seemingly uncontrollable fits of passion. He became exacting and fault-finding to such a degree that living with him became a burden.

He complained of pain down his back with points of tenderness in the lower part of the spinal column. Had fits of despondency and loss of sexual desire. The bowels were fitful in their action, constipated for a week, and then loose for a day or two. Tongue coated in the morning, with capricious appetite. Urine high colored, specific gravity of 1.026 and deposit of brick dust in the vessel after standing, which it was found difficult to remove. Inability to work, especially mental effort, was noticed and being fond of using the typewriter, he found himself striking off the wrong keys, using the wrong words in trying to express himself. At times he had a shuffling gait.

These symptoms continued, gradually growing worse, till the consultation mentioned above was held. My first desire was to clean his system out of the uric acid and regulate his diet. I commenced giving him a teaspoonful of Thialion dissolved in a teacupful of hot water three times a day before meals for three days. This had the desired effect of cleaning out the bowels thoroughly and starting the bile in its natural channel.

Diet restricted to fresh vegetables and cereals, no meat allowed for a week. Then Thialion was given every morning on rising in the same dose and also $\frac{1}{20}$ grain of strychnine was directed to be taken three times a day. At the end of the week the bowels continuing loose, the dose of Thialion was reduced to one-half teaspoonful. He was allowed the ordinary food at the table, but smoking and drinking were tabooed. Improvement at this time was marked. The general symptoms gave way and at the end of two and one-half months of the Thialion treatment he had entirely recovered. In this case the nervous phenomena were markedly prominent and there is no question that when he first consulted me his condition was critical. At this date, June 1st, he says he is entirely well.

IMPORTANT.

As there seems to be considerable difficulty experienced by physicians in procuring Thialion from the druggists, it must be borne in mind that we will send freight prepaid, one bottle, sufficient for three weeks' treatment, on receipt of \$1.00.

THE VASS CHEMICAL COMPANY,

DANBURY, CONN.

The following jobbers have Thialion in stock:

SMITH, KLINE & FRENCH Co., 429-435 Arch St., Philadelphia, Pa.

C. N. CRITTENTON & Co., 115 Fulton St., New York City.

GEO. L. CLAFLIN & Co., 68-72 South Main St., Providence, R. I.

GEO. C. GOODWIN & Co., 36 Hanover St., Boston, Mass.

MELVIN & BADGER, 43 Temple Place, Boston, Mass.

THEO. METCALF Co., 39 Tremont St., Boston, Mass.

APOTHECARIES HALL Co., Exchange Place, Waterbury, Conn.

STODDART BROS., 84 Seneca St., Buffalo, N. Y.

WALKER & GIBSON, 74 State St., Albany, N. Y.

W. J. GILMORE & Co., 428 7th Ave., Pittsburgh, Pa.

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